

**Ambassador Philip T. Reeker**  
**Video-taped Greeting on the Occasion**  
**Of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Peace Corps**

This year, the Peace Corps commemorates 50 years of promoting peace and friendship around the world. In 1960, during his campaign for President, John F. Kennedy challenged American students to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. That revolutionary idea inspired the creation of the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961 when President Kennedy signed the Peace Corps Act.

To mark that important event, throughout March we will celebrate “Peace Corps Month”. Here in Macedonia, as in the United States and other countries around the world, current and former Volunteers, staff members, and friends of the Peace Corps will have the opportunity to reflect on the contributions and friendships that have resulted from President Kennedy’s idea. And 2011 is especially important to us here in Macedonia as it marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first Peace Corps volunteers in this country.

Since 1961, more than 200,000 Americans have served as volunteers in 139 countries. Today almost 9,000 Peace Corps Volunteers serve worldwide, including 78 here in Macedonia. The work they do every day in education, business, community and youth development, and the extra projects they take on in communities around Macedonia, promote development and success in Macedonia, and further strengthens the bonds of friendship between our two countries.

So let me take this opportunity to congratulate our Volunteers – past and present – and to thank them for their service. And I hope you will all join me in wishing the Peace Corps a very happy 50<sup>th</sup> birthday.